



The UK's flagship National Theatre stages a spectacular range of classics, musicals, new plays and entertainment for all the family within its three auditoriums: Olivier, Lyttelton and Cottesloe. Or take a trip back in time at Shakespeare's Globe on London's Southbank, where microphones and stage lighting are thrown aside and, as in Shakespeare's time, audience participation is encouraged.

London is also the capital of the global club scene – after dark, the city's music becomes beat-strewn, upbeat, diverse and eclectic.

Film buffs can enjoy a blockbuster in a plush independent cinema, a 3D experience on the UK's largest screen, sit in the same seats as the Hollywood A-list in Leicester Square, catch a Bollywood classic or visit one of London's annual film festivals.

Comedy fans are also well catered for, from Monty Python to The Young Ones, the British are famous around the globe for their sense of humour. This would probably explain why London presents more live comedy than any other city in the world.

Tickets are available from many different outlets around the city. The Official London Theatre ticket booths, 'tkts' are situated in Leicester Square and Canary Wharf and sell discounted tickets for West End shows on the day of the performance only.

Tickets are also available online through selected ticket agencies or check with the box offices for daily returns. Tickets for West End musicals vary between £10-£45, a booking fee may also apply. To avoid disappointment it is recommended to book tickets as far in advance as possible.

Getting Around:
 London has one of the world's best-integrated transport networks, served by two of the world's busiest airports, Heathrow and Gatwick, with first-class rail, underground and bus links into the city. Also the famous 'black cabs' are in abundance and can be 'hailed' from the kerb. So getting around is easy.

So if you want to add a little extra to your Convention visit and enjoy London then this is a great opportunity to spend some time in one of the most colourful and vibrant cities in the world.



Convention Speaker Feature

Kevin Casha - Island Photography

My business is photography, my life is photography, and my love is photography.

I have now been deeply involved with photography for over 23 years and sincerely consider myself lucky to have been able to tackle virtually any aspect of this fascinating medium.

On a small island like Malta, (380,000 inhabitants with more than an estimated 400 declared photographers and an undeclared multitude of other part-timers), work is not so easy to come by. It is very difficult to specialise in only one or two spheres. In Malta, to earn a decent living out of photography, one must pull up one's socks and be prepared to tackle any job coming one's way.

So one can only imagine the antics I have been up to! Shooting from light planes and helicopters, at times without even a harness and with my feet dangling out! Having to climb on top of super-cranes in the dockyards. Shooting 'Mad Max' style from moving motor-bikes as well as being near enough to blazing fire to have lens filters nearly melting! Deep down in water bore-holes where flashguns start firing by themselves due to high humidity, from yachts and boats with not a very solid stomach. Being in charge of the horse racetrack's photofinish with the camera always working perfectly except when the result is in doubt!! The list is endless.

I have also had some near scrapes with my camera in my hands – one time I was so engrossed with taking pictures at an athletics race that I got run over by a car! Luckily I escaped with a few stitches. Another instance I had to run for dear life whilst in Egypt from a knife-wielding butcher who did not take kindly to me taking his portrait!

Another close scrape came whilst shooting a tiger circus act – someone forgot to shut the tiger's gate properly and I found myself in the middle of the ring with a fine example of a Siberian tiger running amok and attacking an unfortunate attendant just three yards away from me! Yes, I do have the unfortunate knack of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.



On the "normal" front, I have also done a lot of big weddings – weddings regularly having 400 to 500 guests – in Malta, weddings are a big ritual-as well as some important ones with over 1000 guests – such as the weddings of the Maltese Prime Minister's and the President's sons.

Publications are also one of my main money earners, and I am at present working on my twelfth book. Most of these books are commissioned work where I have to shoot to a strict brief, but my pride and joy is a recent book I have managed to publish under my own steam. This book, *Reflections on Life* contains most of what I consider to be my best personal work to date. The financial burden was not easy, as I did not want to include any sponsors at all. This had to be a collection of my favourite images and I did not want sponsors to interfere with what went into the book. Nevertheless, I had to "prostitute" myself for quite some time doing obnoxious work to be able to afford doing this book on my own.

Still, I really do not grumble about my job. I love it to an extent that my whole day revolves around photography. In fact,



I am not an easy person to live with as photography nearly rules my lifestyle. As I said, I have gone through the whole cycle of photographic subjects – from trying to do close-up nature photography with nothing better than a normal lens, to being commissioned for jobs in places like Cologne, Paris and Corsica! A far cry from my first shaky days in Photography!

Although I had a natural talent for drawing and painting, and studied Art under some of Malta's top artists, I always felt I was not cut out to be a painter. Up to the age of 20, I had even managed to get some steady clients who where commissioning me to paint for them. This made me some welcome extra money which helped supplement a not-so-good income as a clerk in the Government

Civil Service – a job which saw me steadily being promoted to compile the Maltese Agricultural Statistics! No guesses that I hated the job and this situation helped further convince me that my future was not in finding out how many pigs where bred and consumed yearly in Malta!

Anyway, after 10 years of this, I decided that I had had enough. I had already bought my first "real" camera, a Canon AE1, and was already busily using my huge amount of relatives and friends (I am the youngest of a family of eight!) as guinea pigs. At some stage or other, they all had to pose for my early photographic experiments, and although today I shudder when I see some of my early pics, the "clients" seemed to like them. With such a large family pool, the occasions were always happening thick and fast for me to get invaluable "hands-on" photographic practice. In those early days I also had to charge base prices to further entice clients. The practical work experience I got in these early stages helped me to learn and improve as well as earn valuable cash to enable me to start upgrading my equipment.



To cut a long story short, I was well and truly bitten by the photographic "bug". I had realized that this job was cut out for me. I have always been bored quickly with doing the same thing day in, day out, so the different aspects of photography suited me perfectly. One day I was doing interiors, another fashion and on another day a wedding! What was more varied and exciting than that? Furthermore, it made me go out and meet people from all walks of life and see more of the world beyond my little island. It was surely much more

inspiring and exciting than sitting in a room by myself, smelling paint and trying to create something with a blank canvas. So I took the plunge of going full time at the age of 27 with my own company "Impact Photographic Services." I eventually found out that I was competing with myself as, on an island like Malta, most people knew me by my name and could not immediately connect me to my company name. So at a later stage, I started doing business under my own name – something which I believe every freelancer should do.

I worked very hard at my new job. I had to prove to myself and those around me that I had made the right decision. I had to



build a name for myself and I did this by really taking care of my clients – trying not to let them down and keeping them happy. Many a time I had to swallow my pride, smile and re-do a job which I thought was good enough, but which my clients (who usually knew more about needlework than photography) thought was not up to scratch.

I have always kept three words in my mind during this time – professionalism, reliability and creativity. I think these three words can make you or break you. I have always tried my utmost to be professional in everything I do. At times I have been unsuccessful, but I have always had the guts to try again. Reliability and keeping a promise to your clients is also very, very important. I have spent many a sleepless night in order to meet a job deadline. Also, I have always maintained a pride in my work, and even though the job might not have been paying enough, I still tried to do my utmost to produce the best images I was capable of giving my clients at that stage.

I retouch and edit each and every print I sell to this day – and that even includes press work and passports! Although a photo might look unimportant to the photographer, it is important to the client – he would not have ordered it if it was not.

Another thing which has given me a sound and loyal client base is that I handle any job they need – no matter how small it is. One day a client might just need a passport. If he is happy with it, he will remember and recommend you for bigger, more lucrative jobs. Proof of this came when I was laid up on my back in bed for about a month after a motorbike accident (yes, motocross was another one of my mad pastimes!). Many of my repeat clients refused to work with another photographer and waited until I could hobble around and start working again! To me, that proved that my attention and patience towards detail had paid off.

Throughout my photographic career, I always felt that marketing of oneself and one's product was important. Talking about myself, especially in those early days, I could not afford to splash out hard-earned cash on advertising and fancy brochures so these limitations made me seek out other ways of building a name for myself. I quickly realized that I was steadily but surely building up a stock of photographs which could be put to better use than just letting them pile up in a box. So I started approaching small clubs, newspapers and the like who usually could not afford to buy photography. Striking up a bargain with publishers, I managed to barter pictures from my stock with advertising and editorial space. Today, my stock library reaches about 15,000 selected images and besides making me money from normal stock sales, enables me to keep

"advertising" my services and pictures for free. In fact, I think this strategy has been very influential in my success.

I also realized the potential of good client recommendation, especially on such a small island like Malta, where it seems that everybody knows everybody else. Thus, I have really endeavoured to please my clients by being flexible and trying to satisfy their whims and fancies. I am not known for my pleasant, easy-going temper, but I have managed to control a lot of stinging replies that I would have loved to dish out at some impossible clients! I think people are tending to become more demanding and spoilt, so a little patience and resignation as well as diplomatic skills come in handy. Take care of your clients and your clients will take care of you. Ninety per cent of my work comes from client recommendation and not from direct advertising.

Finally, being creative and original always helps. People are impressed when you show them something different. Although little is original in today's world, do try and introduce that different angle, mood or humour in your images.

Creative posing and attention to detail always improves a picture. Try to plan your photoshoots. Instruct and brief your clients properly. The more focused you are on what you are going to shoot, the better the pictures will turn out. Planning also helps to eliminate possible mental blocks and awkward moments during your photoshoots.

Although, as I stated before, one cannot really specialise in Malta, I have been lucky enough that during these past years I have had enough work that I am now able to concentrate more and more on working with people, both in the studio as well as on location. I have always had a preference for doing portraiture, fashion and model portfolios, and my efforts have paid off as I now get a lot of work from my favourite sphere of photography. Working with people keeps one on their toes. I like to keep informed on what is happening around me so that I can be able to communicate intelligently with people from all walks of life. One of the secrets of good portraiture and people photography is to manage to get the sitter relaxed – and what better way than to be able to talk on the client's favourite topic? All right, one can never know enough, but a little general knowledge



and tact goes a long way to making your sitter comfortable. I shudder when I see inexperienced students or even not so inexperienced photographers just hiding their face behind their camera and snapping away without even talking or instructing their model! How can a sitter know what you want from him if you do not even communicate?

As my work today consists of a lot of fashion and model photography, I get to mix and meet with the young age group associated with this type of photography. Talking and working with them really keeps my mind young and fresh, and, let's face it, what better stimulation is there for good photography than having a beautiful model in your camera sights? Yes, I admit, this is one of the bonuses of photography and for me beats taking pictures of some inanimate bottle in a studio or an unwilling groom at a wedding!

To my mind, another important aspect of a good photographer's armour, is his willingness to keep learning, especially in today's competitive, ever-changing world. I do not believe that photographers should keep pining away regretting the loss of their darkrooms and their chemicals. Look forward to the future and realize the potential and freedom that digital photography has given us. It has definitely raised photography on two important fronts – that of again making photography easily accessible to the vast public – perhaps even more so than Eastman's invention of the Box Brownie – and also to have raised further the standards of professional high-end photography. Today, the sky is the limit and a creative photographer and artist has all the tools needed to create masterpieces.

Digital photography has perhaps initially lessened the gap between amateurs and professionals. It is now up to the professional photographer to improve, his product and open that gap again. High prices and fancy marketing talk is not what's important – the quality of the end product, client satisfaction and value for money are what matter.

Perhaps our only limitation today is time – but as the saying goes, no pain no gain, and one has to make the time. It has always been like that – give a piece of work to a lazy person and he will find all the excuses not to do it – give it to a busy person and he is bound to make time and conclude it.

Working in a small limited island like Malta is not all plain sailing. More so when your job is photography – a job that is becoming ever more competitive and demanding. The trick I think is to keep abreast of what is going on in the business and adapt. If this means closing down your High Street shop and working from home (to cut down costs and have more time to service your clients) then so be it. Do not stay tied down to convention and sentimentalism. There is little space for these commodities in today's photographic world.

One last note which I would like to leave you with is that each time I pass through a bad moment I always ask myself the question of whether I would change my job. The answer is an unwavering and decisive "No!". If one does not have passion and love for photography one he is definitely in the wrong business!

Kevin Casha FSWPP FMIPP AMPS AMPA



Mark Cleghorn

Mark Cleghorn is a photographer with a distinctive style of his own, his images have won hundreds of awards including the Kodak Gold Award 17 times. His work has been acknowledged by the photographic industry who awarded him 4 Fellowships for his outstanding work, he has influenced photographers across the world setting new trends and techniques but most importantly his portrait & wedding images hang in thousands of homes around the world bringing a smile across generations and a memory and time never to be forgotten.



Since turning pro in 1982 Mark Cleghorn's photography has been turning heads. A people specialist his images, wedding or portrait, social or commercial commissions it does not matter, he is a firm believer that he is only as good as his last shot. Cleghorn has lectured and judged all over the world and still is one of the most creative & influential social photographers shooting and teaching today. Digital and Cleghorn are one word now, since 1997 he has been using digital, and was one of the first in the UK to be film free. It is with digital now that Cleghorn spends most of his teaching time, helping photographers move swiftly from film to profitable digital time. Mark's photography style & lighting

Convention Speaker Feature



was one of the key influences to the Venture Portraits franchise and is one of a unique handful of studios in Europe pushing styles and product boundaries in both traditional and contemporary photography.

Cleghorn has not forgotten his roots like many, and sees digital as just the next step, so much so that in 2004 the book - The Secrets of Posing and Lighting was launched, selling throughout the world. The Book was designed to teach perfect lighting techniques for portraits, lighting has always been a passion and Cleghorn wanted to make sure that his lighting techniques were passed on to the next generations of social photographers in a simple to understand language.



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